DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 095 775 HE 005 848

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TITLE Profile of Entering Freshmen, Fall, 1973 [University of South Carolina]. Research Notes No. 23.
INSTITUTION South Carolina Univ., Columbia. Div. of Student Affairs.
PUB DATE Jul 74
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *College Freshmen; *Demography; *Higher Education; Research Projects; Statistical Data; *Student Characteristics; *Student Opinion
IDENTIFIERS *University of South Carolina

ABSTRACT

During the 1973 fall orientation, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education (ACE) was administered to incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina (USC) and 578 other institutions of higher education including 38 universities. The following study presents a comparative analysis of the various demographic data, opinions and projections of the college freshmen at USC and those of the national norms for other participating institutions of higher learning. Eleven areas of interest were selected for this analysis from the original 52 areas contained in the questionnaire. These 11 were selected to provide a composite profile of the entering freshman at USC, fall 1973. Each of these areas is treated in turn, with tabular data used to represent the research information. The tables of comparison between USC freshmen and the national university norms are followed by a number of comments intended to highlight the major comparisons. (Author)

ED 095775

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Division of Student Affairs

SUBJECT: Profile of Entering Freshmen, Fall, 1973

RESEARCH NOTES NO. 23 **July, 1974**

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Research Notes
No. 23

July, 1974

Subject: Freshmen Profile Fall, 1973

Nature and Scope of the Study:

During 1973 Fall orientation, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education (ACE) was administered to incoming freshmen[1] at the University of South Carolina (USC) and 578 other institutions of higher education including 38 universities. The following study presents a comparative analysis of the various demographic data, opinions and projections of the college freshmen at USC and those of the national norms for other participating institutions of higher learning. Eleven areas of interest were selected for this analysis from the original 52 areas contained in the questionnaire. These eleven were selected to provide a composite profile of the entering freshman at USC, Fall 1973. Each of these areas is treated in turn with tabular data used to represent the research information. The tables of comparison between USC freshmen and the national university norms are followed by a number of comments intended to highlight the major comparisons.[2]

[1]Approximately 86% of the freshman class participated in this survey.

[2]More detailed studies will be initiated periodically on selected variables included in this profile study.

Table 1

A Comparison of Age[3] for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Age by December 31, 1973	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
16 or younger	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
17	5.3	12.7	8.9	4.0	6.5	5.1
18	73.3	73.8	73.5	79.0	82.0	80.4
19	18.1	12.7	15.5	15.2	10.7	13.1
20-25	3.0	0.5	1.7	1.6	0.5	1.2
26 or older	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. Eighteen-year-old students comprised about 80% of entering freshmen nationally whereas the comparable percentage for USC students was 73.5%.

2. USC freshmen represented a larger percentage in both the younger than 18-year-old and older than 18-year-old age groups than did those freshmen in the national norms.

3. Freshmen males at USC were more likely to be over 19-years of age and less likely to be 17 than were freshmen females.

[3]For the purpose of this study, a simplification of age brackets (20 through 25, and 26 or older) was employed. This is due, in part, to the minimal number of participants in those groups.

Table 2

A Comparison of Racial Background for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
White/Caucasian	94.1	92.7	93.4	95.7	94.2	95.0
Black/Negro/Afro-American	5.4	7.1	6.2	2.3	3.9	3.0
Other	0.5	0.2	0.4	2.0	1.9	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. USC was twice as likely to have Black/Negro/Afro-Americans enrolled as were other universities nationally.

2. The percentage of "other" enrolled nationally was 2.0% with the percentage for USC consistently running .5% or less. "Other" included American Indians, Orientals, Mexican-American/Chicanos, Puerto Rican-Americans and other.

Table 3

A Comparison of Average Grade in High School for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Average grade in high school	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
A	11.5	19.7	15.5	25.7	36.3	30.6
B	65.0	68.8	66.8	62.7	59.0	60.9
C	23.2	11.3	17.5	11.6	4.6	8.4
D	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. Nationally, entering freshmen were about twice as likely to have an average grade of "A" in high school than were the freshmen entering USC. USC freshmen were also twice as likely to have an average grade of "C" in high school compared to freshmen nationally.

2. Females, both nationally and at USC, were more likely to have an average grade of "A" in high school and less likely to have a "C" than were freshmen males.

Table 4

A Comparison of Highest Degree Planned Anywhere for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Highest Degree Planned Anywhere	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
None	2.1	1.5	1.8	1.4	2.2	1.8
Associate	0.1	6.7	3.4	0.3	1.3	0.7
Bachelors	29.5	39.9	34.7	22.0	32.9	27.0
Masters	25.1	34.1	29.6	28.5	36.0	32.0
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	15.8	9.7	12.8	16.8	12.5	14.8
M.D., D.D.S., or D.V.M.	13.2	4.8	9.0	17.8	9.2	13.9
L.L.B. or J.D.	12.0	2.4	7.2	11.4	4.5	8.2
Other[4]	2.2	0.9	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. A compilation of percentages for all post-baccalaureate degrees (Masters, Ph.D., M.D., etc.) indicated that freshmen nationally were more prone to seek these higher degrees than were entering USC freshmen.

2. Both nationally and at USC, males were more likely to seek Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., L.L.B., or J.D. degrees, while females were more likely to seek Associate, Bachelors, and Masters degrees as their highest degree planned.

[4]Other includes students who indicated "other" as a response and also those who designated B.D. or M.Div. (divinity) as a planned degree.

Table 5

A Comparison of Reasons Noted as Very Important in Selecting this College[5] for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Reasons Noted as Very Important in Selecting this College	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Good Academic Reputation	36.8	47.7	42.2	59.3	66.8	62.7
Low Tuition	26.2	25.9	26.1	19.5	21.4	20.4
Special Education Program	21.3	29.6	25.4	22.1	32.0	26.7
To Live Away from Home	17.4	28.9	23.0	18.8	29.9	23.9
Advice of someone who Attended	21.0	21.5	21.3	18.6	20.7	19.6

Comments:

1. Good academic reputation was the reason cited most often for both USC and national freshmen, although it was cited less frequently by USC freshmen.

2. Low tuition was indicated as a reason for selecting the college by 26.1% of USC freshmen, while 20.4% freshmen nationally ranked it as important.

[5] The above reasons, which were selected from a list of eleven possibilities, represent the highest five percentages. Other reasons cited were: "Advice of Guidance Counselor," "Parents wanted me to come here," "Offered financial assistance," etc.

Table 6

A Comparison of Estimated Parental Income[6] for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Parental Income	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Less than $6,000	4.9	5.8	5.4	4.8	5.8	5.3
$6,000 - $9,999	10.9	10.3	10.6	10.5	10.4	10.4
$10,000 - $14,999	28.9	25.3	27.1	26.8	26.3	26.5
$15,000 - $24,999	34.3	29.8	32.1	33.8	31.4	32.5
$25,000 - $34,999	11.1	13.7	12.3	12.8	13.4	13.0
$35,000 - $49,999	5.1	9.6	7.2	5.3	6.7	6.3
$50,000 or more	4.8	5.5	5.1	6.0	6.0	6.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. The parental income pattern at USC is almost identical to that of the national norms. When USC freshmen and national norm are compared, every total item difference is less than 1.0%.

2. Almost one USC freshman in four comes from a family with an average annual income of $25,000 or more. At the same time, only 16% come from families with under $10,000 annual income.

[6] The ACE data were divided into fourteen income brackets. For ease of comparison, the brackets were combined into the above seven categories.

Table 7

A Comparison of Probable Major Fields of Study[7] for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Probable Major Field of Study	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Business	25.4	10.6	18.2	18.2	7.5	13.2
Education	4.4	15.5	9.9	3.0	15.4	8.8
Engineering	10.8	0.4	5.7	16.5	1.6	9.6
Health Professional	7.2	23.4	15.1	5.5	15.1	9.9
Arts and Letters	11.4	18.7	14.9	8.1	16.8	12.2
Science and Math	14.9	7.7	11.4	20.4	12.6	16.8
Social and Behavioral Sc.	16.8	15.2	16.1	11.8	14.6	13.1
Other Fields (Technical)	2.1	2.2	2.1	7.1	8.0	7.5
Other Fields (Non-Technical)	3.8	2.9	3.3	5.4	3.2	4.3
Undecided	3.2	3.4	3.3	4.0	5.2	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. High interest fields at USC include business, health professions, arts and letters, and social and behavioral sciences.

2. In comparison with national norms, USC freshmen were more likely to choose business (18.2% compared to 13.2%), health professions (15.1% compared to 9.9%), arts and letters (14.9% compared to 12.2%) and social and behavioral sciences (16.1% compared to 13.1%).

3. In comparison with national norms, USC freshmen were less likely to choose engineering (5.7% compared to 9.6%), science and math (11.4% compared to 12.2%) and other fields (technical) (2.1% compared to 7.5%).

[7] As was indicated for the previous table, several responses have been incorporated into other categories. Science and math includes mathematics and statistics, physics and chemistry, the biological sciences, and the physical sciences. History and geography, psychology, social sciences and social work make up the social and behavioral sciences category. Arts and letters is comprised of arts (fine and performing), English and the humanities.

Table 8

A Comparison of Current Religious Preference[8] for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Religious Preference	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Protestant	72.4	78.7	75.7	45.7	49.6	47.5
Catholic	10.8	10.2	10.5	29.5	27.9	28.7
Jewish	1.9	1.7	1.8	6.5	7.1	6.8
Other	3.6	3.4	3.5	4.5	4.4	4.4
None	11.2	6.0	8.7	13.8	11.0	12.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. Freshmen at USC are more likely to be Protestant, and less likely to be Catholic, Jewish, other or none when compared to freshmen nationally.

Table 9

A Comparison of Political Orientation for USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Political Orientation	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Far Left	2.1	1.1	1.6	2.6	1.4	2.0
Liberal	30.4	29.6	30.0	36.9	34.6	35.7
Middle of the Road	49.1	55.4	52.2	45.3	51.4	48.1
Conservative	17.4	13.8	15.6	14.6	12.4	13.6
Far Right	1.0	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. The majority of USC freshmen considered themselves "middle of the road." At

[8] In order to simplify interpretation of Table 8, the various religions have been grouped into four major categories.

the same time USC students were about twice as likely to classify their political orientation as left or liberal than conservative or far right.

2. In comparison with freshmen nationally, entering freshmen at USC were somewhat less likely to classify themselves as left or liberal and slightly more likely to classify themselves as conservative or far right.

Table 10

A Comparison of Future Estimations Made[9] by USC Freshmen and University National Norms.

Chances are very good that they will ...	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Get a B.A. Degree	76.8	73.7	75.3	78.6	80.7	79.5
Find a Job in a Preferred Field	67.5	66.9	67.2	58.1	56.4	57.3
Be Satisfied with College	56.7	67.1	61.7	54.8	64.6	59.4
Make at Least a B Average	27.4	27.1	27.3	43.1	40.7	42.0
Work at Outside Job	28.5	21.5	25.1	23.8	28.9	25.7
Change Major Field	14.3	14.1	14.2	17.6	20.0	18.7
Change Career Choice	12.3	14.1	13.2	16.5	19.7	18.0
Live in a Coeducational Dorm	9.6	7.4	8.5	30.9	33.2	31.9
Marry Within a Year After College	18.6	27.5	22.9	15.3	20.1	17.5

COMMENTS:

1. Only 27.3% of U.S.C. freshmen said their chances were very good of making at least a "B" average, while 42.0% of the national norm responded likewise. It is interesting to note the similarity between this finding and that reported in Table 3 with regard to freshmen making a grade of "A" in high school.

2. When compared to the national norm, more U.S.C. freshmen indicated that the chances were very good that they will find a job in a preferred field.

3. Career development is expected to be a more stable aspect of the college with only 13.2% of U.S.C. freshmen declaring chances were very good that they would change their career choice as compared to 18.7% nationally. Similarly less U.S.C. freshmen (13.2%) felt they would be likely to change their career choice as compared to their national counterparts (18.0%).

[9] Nine categories were selected as a sample of the more pertinent items from a field of twenty-five categories.

4. Interestingly enough, 8.5% of the entering U.S.C. freshmen indicated chances are very good that they will live in coeducational dorms, even though U.S.C. doesn't presently have such coeducational facilities[10]. Nealy 32% indicated this response nationally.

5. Almost one quarter (22.9%) of U.S.C. freshmen indicated a high probability of marriage within a year after college, compared to only 17.5% on the national university norms.

Table 11

A Comparison of Places of Residence During Fall Term for U.S.C. Freshmen and University National Norms.

Place of Residence	USC Freshmen			National		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
With parents or relatives	29.2	25.8	27.5	18.1	14.8	16.6
Other private home or apartment	5.8	0.7	3.3	2.3	1.5	1.9
College dorm	62.8	73.0	67.8	75.4	81.4	78.2
Fraternity or Sorority House	0.9	0.1	0.5	2.3	0.3	1.4
Other Campus Housing	0.9	0.0	0.5	1.7	1.8	1.8
Other	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Comments:

1. A larger percentage of USC freshmen resided with parents or relatives during the Fall term than did freshmen nationally.

2. In spite of the USC residence policy requiring all freshmen to live in the residence hall except those who are over 21, veterans, married or living with relatives, USC has a lower percentage of its freshmen class living in residence halls than do universities comprising the national norms.

[10]Students checking this response may have planned to live in U.S.C.'s Towers Complex - a coed complex.

SUMMARY

Profile - The average entering Freshman at U.S.C. for Fall, 1973 was:

1. 18 years of age
2. a White/Caucasian
3. a "B" student in high school
4. hoping to achieve at least a Bachelors or Masters degree
5. likely to have selected U.S.C. for its good academic reputation
6. probably from a family whose annual income is between $12,500 and $24,999 (45.4%).
7. a business, health professional, or social and behavioral sciences major
8. a Protestant
9. "middle of the road" in political orientation
10. residing in a college dormitory

Compared with freshmen nationally, U.S.C. freshmen:

1. were less likely to have maintained an "A" average in high school and more likely to have maintained an average of "C".
2. placed less importance in the "good academic reputation" as a reason for selecting this university
3. were more likely to indicate business or health professional fields as probable major fields of study and less likely to choose science and math related fields
4. are more likely to be Protestant and less likely to be Jewish or Catholic.
5. indicated a greater chance of finding a job in a preferred field
6. were less likely to live in a college dormitory and more likely to live with parents or relatives